

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01593 070905Z

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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/051 W

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R 061510Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4202

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1593

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR PFOR SS MR SP AG MO

SUBJECT: GIRM OFFICIAL DELINEATES MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN "PARTITION"
OF SPANISH SAHARA

SUMMARY: DEPARTING CHIEF FOREIGN MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SECTION TOLD DCM AUGUST 5 THAT "ORAL UNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO ON PARTITION SPANISH SAHARA GRANTS NORTH TO MOROCCO AND SOUTH TO MAURITANIA. IT STIPULATES PARTITION LINE WILL START AT CABO BOJADOR ON COAST AND ZIGZAG EAST TO 26 DEGREES N/12 DEGREES E WHERE PRESENT MAURITANIA-SAHARA FRONTIER MAKES RIGHT-ANGLE TURN. ALTHOUGH GIRM AND GOM MAY HAVE AGREED IN GENERAL TERMS ON DIVISION OF SAHARA AT APPROXIMATELY 26TH PARALLEL, WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON PRECISE PARTITION LINE OR EVEN ON CRITERIA TO BE USED EVENTUALLY IN LOCATING EXACT LOCATION OF BORDER. IF DETAILED AGREEMENT IS
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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 01593 070905Z

NOT WORKED OUT BEFORE SPANISH LEAVE, PROCESS WILL

ALMOST INEVITABLY BE MARKED BY HAGGLING AND RECREMINATION. END SUMMARY.

1. BAL MOHAMED EL MOKTAR, WHO WAS RECENTLY IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND IS DEPARTING THIS WEEK FOR BONN AS COUNSELOR OF MAURITANIA'S EMBASSY, PAID FAREWELL CALL ON DCM AUGUST 5. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, BAL NOTED THAT HE RETURNED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO FROM THE HAGUE WHERE HE HELPED PRESENT MAURITANIAN CASE ON SPANISH SAHARA BEFORE ICJ.

2. DCM TOOK OCCASTION TO QUERY BAL ABOUT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN COMMONALITY OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' OULD MOUKNASS AND LARAKI ON AFRICAN TOUR AND QUITE DIFFERENT PRESENTATION OF TWO COUNTRIES A FEW DAYS LATER BEFORE ICJ. BAL COMMENTED THERE WAS LITTLE COORDINATION BETWEEN TWO DELEGATIONS AT THE HAGUE. EACH HAD SET FORTH ITS OWN VIEW OF THE ISSUES. DESPITE DIFFERENCES WHICH APPEARED THERE, HE ASSURED DCM THAT TWO COUNTRIES HAVE COMMON POSITION ON SAHARA. BAL SAID THERE IS NO WRITTEN AGREEMENT ON FUTURE OF TERRITORY, BUT THERE IS AN ORAL UNDERSTANDING. DCM NOTED THAT BOTH COUNTRIES ARE CLAIMING, EITHER IMPLICITLY OR EXPLICITLY, ENTIRE WESTERN SAHARA AND ASKED HOW THERE COULD POSSIBLY BE "COMMON POSITION" ON FUTURE OF TERRITORY.

3. BAL, WHO WAS CLEARLY RELUCTANT TO GO TOO FAR WITH ISSUE, SUGGESTED TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED THAT MOROCCO WILL HAVE SOVEREIGNTY OVER NORTHERN PART AND MAURITANIA OVER SOUTHERN PART OF TERRITORY. WHEN ASKED WHERE DIVISION WOULD BE DRAWN, BAL SAID VAGUELY THAT MAURITANIA WILL HAVE JURUSDICITION UP TO REGION OF EL AAIUN. DCM ASKED IF TWON OF EL AAIUN WOULD BE INCLUDED IN MAURITANIAN SECTION. BAL REPLIED IN NEGATIVE, AND SAID DIVISION WOULD BE FURTHER SOUTH. DCM THEN ASKED BAL TO INDICATED ON MAP OF SPANISH SAHARA WHERE LINE WOULD BE DRAWN. BAL POINTED TO CABO BOJADOR, AND EXPLAINED THAT PARTITION LINE WOULD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 01593 070905Z

GO FROM THIS POINT TO INTERSECTION OF 26 DEGREES NORTH LATITUDE AND 12 DEGREES EAST LOGITUDE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT PARTITION LINE BETWEEN ATLANTIC COAST AND INTERSECTION POINT WOULD NOT BE STRAIGHT, BUT WOULD DEVIATE TO NORTH AND SOUTH OF STRAIGHT LINE. (WE ASSSUME LINE WOULD FOLLOW COURSE REFLECTING ETHNIC DIVISIONS OR TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS OF PASTURELAND.)

4. THEN DCM COMMENTED THIS PARTITION WOULD PLACE
BU CRAA PHOSPATE MINES IN MOROCCO, BAL REPLIED THAT
"MAURITANIA IS INTERESTED IN PEOPLE NOT RICHES."
AT SAME TIME, HE READILY AGREED THERE MAY BE SIGNIFI-
CANT MINERAL AND OTHER RESOURCES IN SOTUHER SECTOR.

5. COMMENT: BAL'S ACCOUNT OF PROPOSED MAURITANIAN
SPHERE OF SOVEREIGNTY COINCIDES CLOSELY WITH "ZONE
OF INFLUENCE" FORMULA FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS USED
IN CONVERSATION LAST JUNE WITH AMBASSADOR (NOUAKCHOTT
1219). ALTHOUGH GIRM AND GOM MAY WELL HAVE AGREED
IN GENERAL TERMS ON DIVISION OF TERRITOY AT APPROXI-
MATELY 26TH PARALLEL, WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE TWO
GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED ON PRECISE LOCATION OF PAR-
TITION LNE OR EVEN ON ETHNIC, TRIBAL OR PASTURAGE
CRITERIA BY WHICH PRECISE LINE WILL BE ULTIMATELY
FIXED ON THE GROUND. WE SUSPECT THAT ORAL UNDER-
STANDING HAS BEEN COUCHED IN RESONANT GENERALITIES
WITH PARTIES AGREEING THAT DETAILS WILL BE WORKED
OUT AFTER DEPARTURE OF SPANISH. SUCH A FORMULA
VIRTUALLY GUARANTEES HAGGLING AND RECRIMINATION,
FIRST OVER MAPS AND LATER OVER DEMARCATION POSTS.SHINN

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